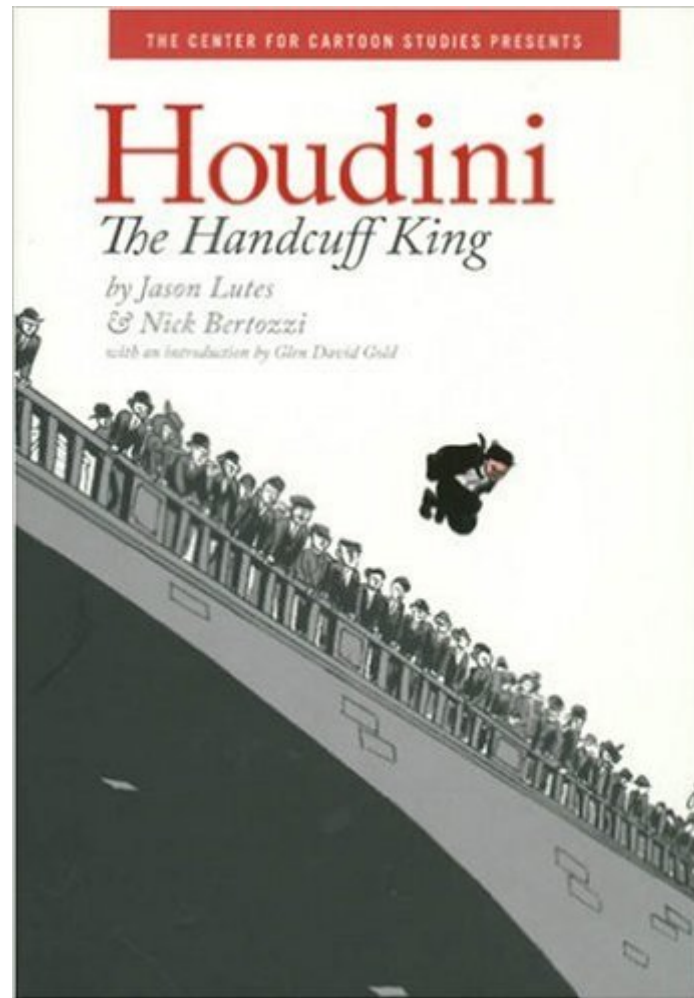


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Houdini: The Handcuff King



Synopsis

Harry Houdini mesmerized a generation of Americans when he was alive, and continues to do so 80 years after his death. This is a "snapshot" of Houdini's life, centering on one of his most famous jumps. As Houdini prepares for a death-defying leap into the icy Charles River in Boston, biographer Jason Lutes and artist Nick Bertozzi reveal Houdini's life and influence: from the anti-Semitism Houdini fought all his life, to the adulation of the American public; from his hounding by the press, to his loving relationship with his wife Bess; from his egoism to his insecurity; from his public persona -- to the secret behind his most amazing trick! And it's all in graphic form, so it's fresh, original, and unlike anything previously published about this most fascinating of American showmen. Â

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (12 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I just can't help but wonder," the magician Harry Houdini wonders at the end of "Houdini: The Handcuff King," a graphic novel by Jason Lutes and Nick Bertozzi, "will anyone even remember me a hundred years from now?"Who can tell, awash as we are in the flood of current events, movies, books, comic books and other forms of entertainment? He certainly deserves to be, if only as a historical figure, a stage magician who built his reputation by being the best magician and escape artist there ever was, and by making sure everyone knew it."Houdini" tells this story by focusing on the events of a single day -- May 1, 1908 -- and a single publicity stunt, in which Houdini leapt into the near-frozen Charles River in Cambridge, Mass., wearing only a bathing suit and shackled at the wrists and ankles. Writer Jason Lutes follows the magician as he works at his craft, is interviewed by

the press (and, like modern athletes, showing that he's capable of making them laugh, but also bringing out the claws to defend his reputation) and working with the police while rehearsing his stunt. And even though we know what to expect, he still pulls several surprises, working the reader as well as the audience. Historical figures do not operate in a vacuum, and neither did Houdini. While watching him work, we're also made aware of the support network he built around him, starting with his loving wife, Bess, who he relied on for emotional support off-stage and as an assistant on-stage. Houdini also needed someone to promote his shows, and to protect him from unscrupulous rivals. It's a measure of the respect he engendered that he took to the grave the secrets of his most spectacular stunts.

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